



**SCHOOL**  
THE WORLD

**2020**  
Annual Report



## Dear Supporters,

It's been said that times of challenge not only test your resilience, but also breed innovation. For School the World, the COVID-19 pandemic did both.

Paradoxically, while the pandemic tested the resolve of our communities and of School the World, it made us stronger. When schools closed in Central America, it forced us to think outside the box to create novel ways to bring education into the homes of the children we serve. It allowed us to see how resilient they are when provided the proper learning tools.

**Along the way, you were there to support our mission, and for that we are grateful. Your generous donations allowed us to find those new ways to reach these children in 2020.**

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we chose not to furlough our field staff. Instead, we set the team up for remote work, raced to ensure our children and families were safe and began strategizing for “remote learning” without the internet, without laptops and, in many cases, without a radio or even electricity.

That’s where the ingenuity and hard work of our staff came in. We brought remote learning to our children, sending homework to them and messages to parents through WhatsApp. In communities without cell service, our team’s “essential worker” friends and family hand-delivered lesson plans for us. We also partnered with radio stations to create and deliver School the World Radio with “Storytime,” weekly lessons and even “Radio-Novelas” to guide unschooled parents through schooling at home.

**That was just the beginning; our innovation continued throughout the year to keep our children “in school” and learning. You can read about it in this annual report!**

Through it all, we have learned anything is possible if we remain true to our mission and are determined to find solutions. With the virus spreading in Latin America and schools closing again, our children continue to be at high risk of multi-year learning loss, dropping out of school and being lost to extreme poverty. We—and they—could lose the gains we have fought so hard to make.

While the past year tested our resilience and that of the children, it showed us the difference a committed community can make. **You are all part of our community. Now, let’s show our children the support they need!**

Please consider making a very generous donation this year.



Kate Curran  
Founder & CEO



Cynthia Clemson  
Chair, Board of Directors

# 11 Years of School the World!



**107**  
Schools Built

**56**  
Playgrounds Built



**11,796**  
Children Educated

**354**  
Scholarship & Alternative  
Learning Students



**3,008**  
Teachers Trained



**6,840**  
Parents Empowered



**235**  
Infants And Toddlers  
Engaged In Learning



**451**  
Libraries Stocked



# 2020 Started Off With A Bang

It's amazing to think what a dedicated group of supporters can inspire. While our team provided the vision and boots on the ground to bring educational resources to even more children in need in Central America, your 2019 support enabled us to make this a reality.

We had such an outstanding start to the year, achieving SO much in just a couple of months!



## Brought Technology Into The Classroom!

We know how essential digital literacy skills are to a student's success in an ever-connected world. However, the majority of our students have never used a computer, let alone a mouse or keyboard. That's why we partnered with **Fundación Tigo Guatemala** to create not one, but TWO computer labs as part of our **NEW Digital Literacy Initiative!** The results will have far-reaching impacts on our students.



## Reached More Middle School Students Than Ever Before!

Imagine a child had to stop learning after the 6th grade due to their family's finances. The effects could be devastating, continuing a cycle of poverty they desperately want their children to escape. And children who love to learn, want to continue learning. That's why we expanded our **Scholarship Program** to provide full and partial scholarships to **more than 150 NEW girls and boys**, so they can continue learning in middle school!



## Hosted Our 1st Panama Service Trip!

**¡Bienvenidos a Panama!  
(Welcome to Panama!)**

We have seen the impact School the World has had on communities in Guatemala and Honduras and we are ready to reach more children in need! We kicked off our expansion into Northern Panama with our February 2020 Student Service Trip where eighty-five U.S. high school students traveled for a successful and meaningful week of service and cultural exchange, building 3 schools and 2 playgrounds, in the Ngäbe-Buglé Comarca!



## Held Our 3rd Successful Corporate Trip!

Corporate service trips are an outstanding way for employees to bond outside of the office, working together to build something meaningful as well as networking with people from other companies around the world! In March, 18 employees from **Flywire**, **Envisage International**, **IMG**, **International Citizens Group**, and **IvyWise** joined us on our 3rd annual corporate service trip!



## Expanded Our Reach Into Early Childhood!

**The earlier the better!** In order to prepare children for schooling, we launched our **NEW Early Childhood Program**, centered around school readiness for children 0-6 years old. We developed curriculum and trainings, complete with video instruction, so empowered volunteers can lead this program in their communities!



# All Of A Sudden, Everything Changed

While we enjoyed great success during the first couple of months in 2020, COVID-19 quickly spread around the world. It forced the closure of schools in March, just 3 weeks into the school year, sending students in rural Central America home without any access to education. The concern was that without learning resources at home, children would fall further behind, reversing years of progress. Girls were at a greater risk of early marriage, teenage pregnancy and domestic violence. The cycle we and they were fighting to end would continue.

Nonetheless, while the pandemic made us fearful of the future, we were able to quickly pivot and innovate many interventions and programs so children could keep learning.

CHILDREN IN LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARRIBEAN HAVE

lost an average of  
**4X more days**  
of school

COMPARED TO THOSE IN THE  
REST OF THE WORLD.

- UNICEF

## Used WhatsApp As An Educational Tool

When schools closed, we quickly started sending messages to parents over WhatsApp about how to stay healthy and safe. We wanted to arm them with messaging about the need for social distancing and regular hand-washing. We then began to use the app as an educational resource, sending homework to children and inspirational graphics to parents about the importance of education. We remained hopeful for the future, encouraging parents to re-enroll their children in schools once they reopened.

**65,623**

WHATSAPP MESSAGES

AND

**5,526**

CALLS TO PARENTS

TO KEEP CHILDREN ENGAGED  
AND LEARNING FROM HOME.



## Lessened Inequities With Printed Work Guides

The pandemic further exposed and compounded inequities among indigenous, rural children and their urban counterparts—and we've long been working to level that playing field. COVID-19 showed us how much work we still have to do, and it lit a fire under us to become even more committed to this work. The children we serve live in remote areas, often far removed from cell service due to geography and poverty. That means they cannot access work guides through WhatsApp, so we found a way to safely hand-deliver them.

## Broadcasted School the World Radio

Delivering work guides to children was a great start, but with school reopenings nowhere in sight, we knew we needed to come up with something engaging that could reach more children and provide a routine similar to school. Our staff realized that although homes in our communities might not have had TVs or internet, many did have radios! **As a result, our team developed curriculum and partnered with local radio stations to broadcast weekly lessons, a Storytime program and a Radio-Novela for parents.** In Storytime, children were read a 30-minute audiobook and were prompted to answer questions, listening again the next day to hear the answers over the airwaves. During the Radio-Novela, parents learned important lessons such as the importance of having boys help equally with chores so girls can also learn. All of this helped enhance learning while at home during the pandemic. We also hosted twice-daily PSAs about the importance of education and returning to school when they reopen.

73%

OF CHILDREN  
REPORTED LISTENING  
TO STW RADIO  
REGULARLY



*“The radio program that I listened to was very useful for children and the entire family. I loved the advice about hygiene for children.” — FAMILY MOTHER*



## Created WhatsApp Support Groups And Taught Girls Their Rights

The stay-at-home orders during the pandemic can create uncertain, and at times, unsafe environments for girls as they no longer have the safe haven of a school. These teenage girls are at risk of entering early marriage and/or suffering abuse. Their families' economic situations, exacerbated by COVID-19, could also send the girls into the labor force instead of attending school. We wanted to give them back their safe space, so we created **WhatsApp Support Groups**. That way, they always have someone to turn to (virtually) while at home. We also created work guides with accompanying trainings, teaching them about their rights, how to stay safe and report violence, and how teenage pregnancy and early marriage can deeply affect their lives. The goal is to keep them engaged in education, so they will return to school once it reopens.



“ I really liked participating in the virtual workshops and WhatsApp groups. I learned what rights girls have and that they should get the same opportunities as boys in school.”

— GIRLS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



## Kept Middle School Boys And Girls Engaged In Their Learning

For those who had access to Zoom and/or WhatsApp, we hosted workshops that included curriculum from the Ministry of Education as well as our own lessons about the importance of education, re-enrolling in school and staying on track!

## Developed A Book Exchange To Spark Joy

With schools closed, children were without a regular supply of books to read as our students do not have books at home. In order to keep the kids reading, we created a library exchange program, allowing them to “checkout” a book every other week. This allowed our children to escape into a book and continue to improve their literacy skills while schools were closed. **Shoutout to School the World’s BOOK CLUB members, our monthly giving community, for providing these books!**



“ I can’t read or write so my children read these books to me and that’s how I know what they are about. They are very beautiful and help my children learn.”

— MOTHER



## Trained Teachers Virtually

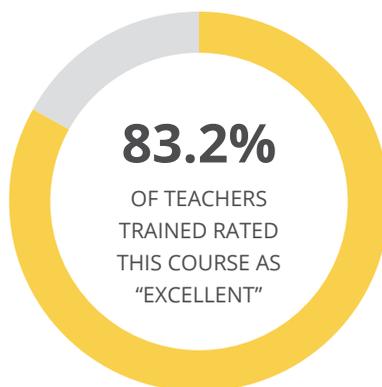
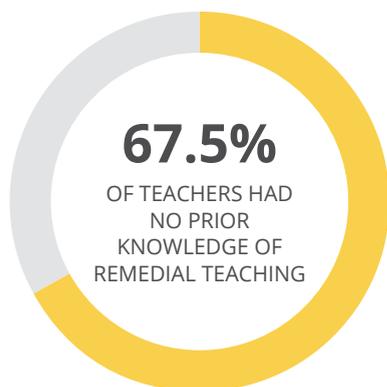
When classes resume in-person, it will be vital for teachers to assess their students' learning gaps and get them back up to speed with where the class would normally be educationally. If teachers were to simply pick up where they left off when the pandemic hit, students would not only be behind, but may get frustrated, and drop out of school. To stem this, School the World created and rolled out **a five-week virtual training program focused on critical remedial techniques**. Trained teachers in rural Central America now understand how to evaluate students' learning in order to teach at the right level as well as work with students one-on-one and use digital tools to send children homework while at home, minimizing learning loss. We are very proud of this training program; it has been so impactful that we plan to continue it in 2021! In fact, it is so effective that the Ministry of Education in Guatemala and Honduras encouraged us to open it to teachers outside of the communities we serve!



“

*The strategies I have learned from the course will strengthen our students' learning process. The digital tools I learned were very useful. Before, I did not know how to help the students catch up or teach from a distance and now I, and my entire team, do. This course motivated us to keep going and know that we can still help the children!”*

— PATRICIA, 6TH GRADE TEACHER, HONDURAS





# A Virtual Celebration To Support Families In Need!

Our 2020 Relief Benefit Gala was held virtually in October. Through the Silent Auction, 'Fund A Need', Event Sponsors and the incredible support of our Peer-to-Peer Fundraisers, we raised \$330,000! All proceeds from this inspiring night went straight to our **Resilience Fund**, which supported our COVID-19 programming, keeping children learning during the pandemic and providing innovative ways to reach them while at home. A special thank you to our event attendees, sponsors and committee members, the virtual gala was indeed a huge success! We were thrilled to honor **Nicole Sahin** (CEO, Globalization Partners) with the **Global Citizenship Award**, **Paul M. English** (Founder, Kayak) with the **Champion for Education Award**, and **Dr. Shefali Tsabary** (Best Selling Author) with the **Champion for Children Award**. The gala was an inspiring night for improving the lives of children through education!



## Our 'Fund A Need' Alone Funded:

**19**  
GIRLS  
SCHOLARSHIPS

An icon of a girl wearing a graduation cap, representing the 19 girls scholarships funded.

**255**  
PHONE TUTORS

An icon of a telephone handset, representing the 255 phone tutors funded.

**60**  
TABLETS

An icon of a tablet device, representing the 60 tablets funded.

**1,000**  
BOOKS

An icon of a stack of books, representing the 1,000 books funded.

# Our 2020 Fundraisers!

## We Are Proud Of #TeamSTW!

Over the summer months, members of #TeamSTW came together to run or walk a 5K or half marathon, do 150 pushups, host a spin class—whatever their heart's desired — to raise money for School the World! We are blown away by their dedication and grateful for everyone's generosity, including Olivia O'Malley and Manolo Sandoval, who collectively raised a total of \$23,094 by running half marathons.

Olivia's service trip to Guatemala was canceled due to COVID-19, so she fundraised instead and nearly doubled her fundraising goal! **"I was so happy to join #TeamSTW and thrilled that even without traveling to Guatemala, I could still make a difference!"** she says.

Meanwhile, Manolo, a STW Young Advisory Board member, created the **Marathon Manny Team** and got his friends and family in Guatemala and the U.S. to run with him!

**There indeed is no limit to what committed individuals can accomplish!**

## Resilience Fund Fundraisers Raise \$41,000!

The lockdowns across Central America last year were further proof of how important resilience is. Although the pandemic had its grip on our daily lives, it could not keep members of our School the World community from leading successful, individual fundraisers! Our incredible volunteers raised a total of \$41,000 for girls' scholarships, preloaded tablets and books! Your work was a bright light during what was a very challenging year for many. You have impacted the lives of countless children.

**Want to be a superstar fundraiser for our new initiative, Project Equity, and bring tutoring, tablets, and inexpensive smartphones to children while schools remain closed?**

Email [info@schooltheworld.org](mailto:info@schooltheworld.org) for more details!



# Meet Our Board Members

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CFO, Continuum Innovation

## BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT:

# Cynthia del Aguila

### Why did you get involved with School the World?

Ten years ago, I was working at a USAID program as the education manager and STW Founder Kate Curran made a presentation about the program. I completely fell in love with it and we worked together for five years. Then in 2012, I became Guatemala's Minister of Education, and Kate supported my initiatives since our objectives for education coincide. In 2016 she invited me to become a board member, which is a real honor.

### How is STW unique to other NGOs you've seen in Guatemala? What makes it stand out?

STW gets involved with the people. Its grassroots initiatives start with the community and local authorities, giving them a sense of ownership. STW also promotes parents' knowledge and empowers them to be involved in and responsible for their children's education.

### When COVID-19 hit and schools closed, how do you think STW showed resilience?

STW showed resilience by being present. They never quit, even when the Ministry of Education did not allow schools to be open. I think STW was the first, if not the only, NGO supporting education in the schools, visiting students in their homes, training teachers in remote learning, creating educational resources for teachers and students, and inventing new ways of delivering education.

### Where do you see STW in 5-10 years?

Hopefully supporting the Ministry of Education by being involved with more schools, providing children and youth a learning experience that could change their lives.

### What are you most excited about for the future of STW?

STW is reaching the really underserved children and youth in my country. They are an example to other NGOs and local authorities, so I am excited about the growth of the program to include more schools, parents, teachers and, of course, students, to make a change in the young people's lives.



# School the World's 2020 Financials\*



**\$739,109**

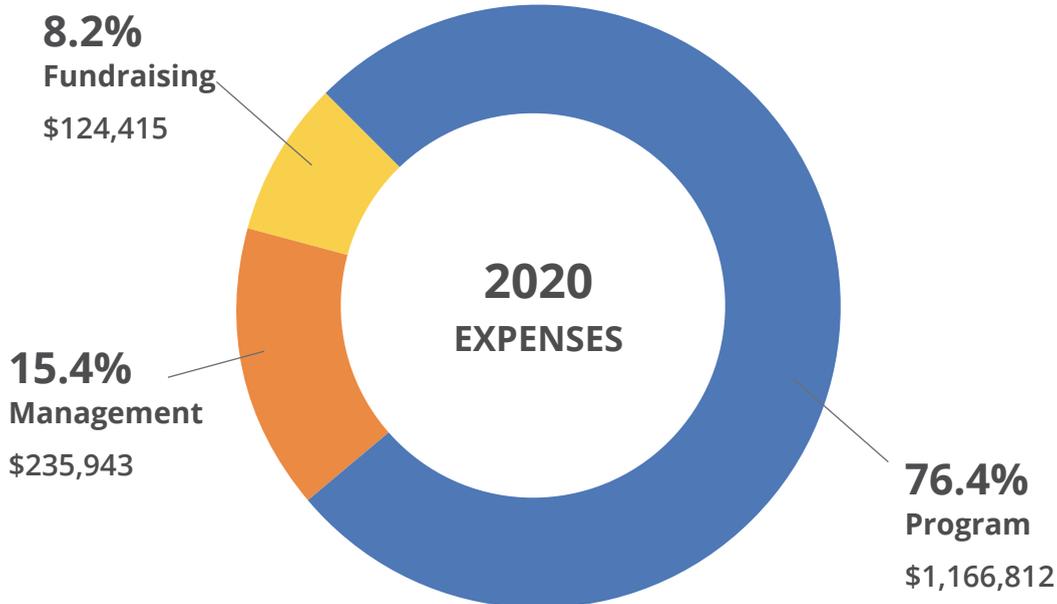
2020 Assets



**\$155,251**

2020 Liabilities

	2019	2020
<b>Revenue</b>	\$2,241,771	\$1,727,297
<b>Expenses</b>	\$2,011,007	\$1,527,170
<b>Net Surplus</b>	\$228,967	\$200,127



# Pandemic Impact

- \* The cancellation of Student Service Trips had a major impact on operating revenue. Through a concentrated effort, individual giving increased 20%, allowing us to finish 2020 financially healthy, despite the loss of programmatic support. Normally, our administrative cost ratio (fundraising & management) is 18-20%, but the shut down in Central America halted school construction, and the cancellation of service trips and resulting decrease in related programmatic spending greatly altered these functional ratios.

## When COVID-19 hit, School the World immediately implemented our Crisis Management Framework:

### 1 MANAGE CRISIS

To ensure the safety of our staff and partners, we cancelled our Spring Student Service Trips and set staff up with tools to work remotely. PSAs were sent to communities with COVID-19 health awareness.

### 2 MAINTAIN IMPACT

As detailed on pgs. 8 to 12, once we knew everyone was safe, we pivoted to meet the new needs of communities. Our top priority was enabling children to learn at home with schools closed.

### 3 PROTECT THE ORGANIZATION

Steps were taken to ensure that we could continue carrying out our mission throughout the pandemic:

- Stopped discretionary spending
- Pay cuts & delayed hiring until 2021
- Closed Boston office
- Paycheck Protection Program

### 4 PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

With pandemic-focused programming underway, our focus shifted to mitigating learning loss and future educational impact. We prepared to weather the storm by:

- Weekly financial scenario planning
- Our Resilience Fund, which supported 2020 COVID-19 Programs
- Innovation & adapted strategies for engaging students at home







# Engage With Us In 2021 Project Equity

**The pandemic will continue to affect the communities for years to come.** Not only has it created learning gaps for them, but it has set their families back financially. That increases the likelihood of children leaving school to help support their families, or marrying young. It makes the work we do even more important. All children deserve the right to an education, regardless of economic situation. **Let's join together to provide these resources to make learning while schools are closed more equitable and accessible!**



## A Summer Of Learning!

We will start with our new “Summer School” in Guatemala and Honduras. Our staff and volunteer teachers will develop a **3 week curriculum to reintroduce children of all ages into the classroom!** Through activities, focusing on competencies in areas identified as weak during our pre-testing in 2020, children will get up-to-speed. We will use guides from the Ministry of Education and activities created by our staff. We hope to implement this program again at the end of the 2021 school year to mitigate even further learning loss heading into 2022.



## Guatemala Tutoring Program: Phoning Up A Tutor

In partnership with local universities, children who have access to a phone will be **paired with a university student** who will tutor them for 30+ minutes, two times per week over the phone using the work guides and curriculum provided by Guatemala’s Ministry of Education.



## Honduras Tutoring Program: Peer-to-Peer Tutoring

There’s no better way to continue to engage our older students than by having them utilize what they have learned to tutor the younger children. **Not only will the older students gain leadership skills, but they fill a gap — the majority of our communities in Honduras have little-to-no cellular signal, making phone tutoring impossible.** That’s why peer-to-peer tutoring is important and we can’t wait to launch it!



## Staying Connected And Learning Over The Phone

A main driver of low participation from students in middle school during the pandemic stemmed from the lack of access to a phone, which made it impossible to participate in distance learning activities. As a solution, **we are providing smartphones to our scholarship and alternative model middle school students, so that even when schools are closed, students can stay in touch** with our staff, complete assignments

with their teachers and participate in our support groups! Additionally to stay motivated and engaged in their studies, scholarship students will participate in our latest “Life Plan” project over Zoom and WhatsApp where they will connect the dots between what they are doing now and how education plays a role in getting them where they want to be in the coming months, years and beyond!



## Preloaded Tablets with Apps in Every Home

Providing a preloaded tablet for every home **will further close the resource gap between urban and rural schools**. We will supply the tablets and train families on how to use educational apps such as Khan Academy, so the children can continue to learn at home.



## Training Teachers for Greater Impact!

Our virtual training has been highly successful at instructing Guatemalan and Honduran teachers on how to assess students’ learning loss and provide them “catch-up” teaching strategies. **We will update the training and deliver it to even more teachers**, impacting a greater number of children. We will do all of this in partnership with the countries’ Ministry of Education, coming together for the common good.



## In-Classroom Teacher Coaching!

When schools reopen, we will visit the teachers who completed our Virtual Training and give them **in-classroom one-on-one training to further their skills on identifying each student’s needs** and getting them caught up. It’s so vital to support our educators this way, as they are key to our efforts to help children learn and charter a path out of poverty.

# GET INVOLVED IN 2021!



## Give To Our 2021 Together Rising Fund

School the World's Together Rising Fund will finance our 2021 Project Equity Initiative! Contribute by scanning the QR code below with your phone's camera, using the enclosed envelope or by visiting [schooltheworld.org](https://schooltheworld.org)



## Fundraise For The Together Rising Fund

Celebrating a special birthday, anniversary or simply passionate about supporting our mission?! Fundraise for our Together Rising Fund, financing our 2021 Project Equity Initiative. Get your family and friends involved through a virtual fundraiser, an outdoor happy hour, email and social media outreach, and much more!



## Participate in our 2021 Hybrid Gala this Fall!

There are many ways to get involved in our 3rd Annual Gala this Fall. Some ways include attending our Boston-based event, hosting a satellite fundraiser in your town, joining our event committee and more! Email [info@schooltheworld.org](mailto:info@schooltheworld.org) for more info!



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